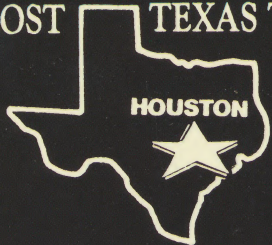


Collectables

Lightnin' Hopkins

THE LOST TEXAS TAPES



VOLUME 1

COL 5203

LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS

THE LOST TEXAS TAPES

VOLUME 1

COL-CD-5203

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

Program

1. From Man To Man - 3:46
2. I Wish I Was A Baby - 3:34
3. Little Boy Blue - 4:24
4. The Crazy Song - 3:03
5. Lightnins Love - 4:40
6. That Man From New York City - 3:04
7. Take It If You Want It - 2:24



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Lightnin' Hopkins

THE LOST TEXAS TAPES



Volume 1

This album is number 1 in a series of five albums recorded by Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins and produced by Aubrey Mayhew. Each album relates to a relationship and experience between Aubrey Mayhew and Sam Hopkins which is fully explained in the form of liner notes on each album.

The notes on each album tell the story relating to that particular album, and the full story is told in the five album series. This process may be different from usual liner notes, but Sam Hopkins was an unusual man and for one to have had a relationship with him outside of his entertainment circle, was in itself unusual.

Sam did not fraternize in the music business. He did not trust music people from big cities, record companies or anyone he thought was using him to get his recorded performances. He stayed within his own small circle of friends. To have gained his trust and friendship was special.

It is hoped that you will read each story and enjoy the albums as presented by Collectables in this rare collection of Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins at his intimate best.

During the early sixties I was independently recording a variety of artists and tapes, including progressive jazz and mariache bands from Mexico. A friend who owned the Gold Star recording studio in Houston, Texas called me and asked if I knew of Lightnin' Hopkins. I told him, of course I did, but had not heard about him lately, nor did I know where he was. He said he lived somewhere in Houston and that I should try to record him.

I liked the idea and went to Houston that week to find Sam Hopkins. It was not easy and after a process of inquiry at the clubs around town and the local musicians union, of which Sam was not a member, I was finally told where he lived. I immediately went to his house, which was a basic frame dwelling in a traditional black neighborhood. A woman answering the door appeared to be a landlady rather than a relation to Sam. She was apprehensive and wanted to know why I wanted to see Sam. Maybe he was there and maybe he wasn't...she'd see.

After a few minutes she invited me in and guided me upstairs, down a hall to a small room then left. As I stepped inside, it was dark and sparsely furnished with only necessities. A narrow cot was on the wall opposite the door. A man was lying on the cot. I asked if he were Lightnin' Hopkins. He said he was and asked what I wanted. I told him I was a record producer and wanted to record him providing he wasn't under contract to a recording company. That was a silly statement and it brought a smile to his face because as I learned very quickly, Sam didn't sign contracts with record companies.

I was apprehensive and a little uncomfortable because Sam didn't get up, didn't look at me and didn't initiate any conversation. He appeared very strange to me just lying there in the semi-dark room. He was dressed in pants, an undershirt and a stocking cap.

I didn't know the man and really didn't know how to approach him, certainly not in a straight forward business manner. I was white, fully dressed in a suit and tie and wanted something. I didn't know where to start. He didn't seem bothered by any of this...perhaps he sensed that my motives were artistic and not greed oriented.

Although I had worked with and produced some of the biggest names in the business, I was never in awe of anyone, nor was I ever a fan. But sitting in that humble room with this totally unaffected man who was an unquestioned master of his art and a giant in music, I felt strange, but privileged to be there.

After my attempt at the amenities and small talk, I asked if he would allow me to produce a record on him. There was no fencing with his reply, just black and white... no pun intended. He wanted to know how many songs I wanted and how much I would pay. I told him I wanted twelve songs and would pay whatever he thought was fair. He told me how much and I agreed.

Next, I asked about setting the recording time, what songs he would do and the general arrangements for a session. He just wanted to know when and where, that I could do whatever I wanted and he would be there. That's all there was to it... except for some low toned comments about me being from New York and I was probably like the rest. I responded by telling him he was wrong on both accounts and if he thought that, then why was he agreeing to go do the session. He said he needed the money and only recorded when he needed money. I just happened to catch him at the right time. He also, said he didn't record for just anybody,

only two other people. He said he sensed he could trust me not to take advantage or to pressure him. I told him we would record the next day at 2 PM at Gold Star, if that was O.K., and he nodded that it was. I left and went to prepare the session. I booked the studio, hired six of the best blues players in town and waited.

The next day at 2 PM everybody was in place when Sam arrived with overcoat, hat and guitar in hand. His first question was who are all these musicians? Your band. He said he didn't record with no band, just he and his guitar. I was learning, but, I stupidly said, you can't record without a band. Sam said, he would not record with a band and started to leave the studio. I recovered quickly and asked Sam to wait, which he did, but he never moved from the door. I paid the band members, thanked them and they left.

Sam proceeded to a stack of folding chairs and took two of them to the center of the empty studio, which was 60' x 90' with a 30 foot ceiling. Sam systematically took off his coat and hat and laid them on one chair. Then he took the guitar, a modest solid body electric instrument, out of the case. Then he sat down and began to tune the guitar by ear. At that point, I left the control booth and approached him to ask about the songs and titles, and to lay out the course we would take. He just ignored me as I stood there. After a few minutes, he said he was ready, but did I bring the money. I told him I did and he started playing. I said we are not ready and he said I'd better get ready, that he was only going to do this one time.

I returned to the booth to take my formal position as producer and went through the motions of announcing "take one". He sang the first song and I stopped the tape to prepare for the next take or song, but he kept on playing. At that point, I told the engineer to just run the tape non-stop. It was plain to see he was going to sing straight through the session. After the third song, he stopped and asked me how many he had done and I told him three. He thought it was four and we had a meeting in the middle of the large room. We discussed the number of songs. He wanted to know, was I sure I had the money and that he was only going to do the agreed number of songs. At the end of the meeting, he became very friendly and kept repeating that I was going to be his main man, even if I was from New York. One of the songs on this session is, "That Man From New York City", which he conjured up and sang for me. By the way, I'm from Nashville, Tennessee and was only working in New York at the time.

I returned to the booth and let the tape run until Sam finished. He then, put this guitar away, put his coat and hat on, threw the empty gin bottle in the trash and replaced the two chairs. I gave him his money and he left. As he exited, he said; Mr. New York man, you are alright with me".

Photographs courtesy of Aubrey Mayhew.

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LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS
THE LOST TEXAS TAPES
VOLUME 1

COLLECTABLES RECORDS
COL-CD-5203

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

MADE IN CANADA

PROGRAM

1. From Man To Man 2. I Wish I Was A Baby 3. Little Boy Blue
4. The Crazy Song 5. Lightnins Love 6. That Man From New
York City 7. Take It If You Want It

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